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TADEUSZ GEDE'S SPEECH AT THE NINTH PLENUM  
ON POLAND'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC TRADE,  
AND ON THE PURCHASING AND CONTRACT ORGANIZATION

Nowe Drogi  
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[The following report of Tadeusz Gede, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, was given at the Ninth Plenum of the KC PZPR (Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party), held in Warsaw on 29-30 October 1953.]

The report was given at the plenum as an amplification of the featured report of Premier Boleslaw Bierut, "Task of Party in Struggle to Raise Standard of Living of Workers in Current Phase of Building Socialism." An English-language translation of Bierut's report is available in the PAP (Polish Press Agency) release of 6 November 1953, pages 1-44.]

• Socialist domestic trade, the purchasing and contracting apparatus, and foreign trade should play an important role in fulfilling the economic tasks facing us in the next few years.

Socialist trade is very important in meeting the constantly growing needs of the working people. Without expanding trade and without eliminating some of the serious deficiencies which still exist, we cannot even think of accomplishing our tasks in the present stage of building socialism. According to the theses, turnover in retail trade and food services will increase in the next 2 years by at least 20 percent, at comparable prices. I believe that as a result of further work on the plan, this percentage can be increased. But even 20 percent is a relatively high percentage if we take into consideration that turnover in 1953 will increase over 1952 by about 6-7 percent, according to expected fulfillment.

The task is even more difficult because, besides the quantitative increase in goods, there must also be a notable improvement in the quality and variety of goods sold. To attain the planned turnover increase and the improved market supply all means at the disposal of all units of our economy must be put into operation. It will not be enough to have good central planning for production of goods earmarked for the market, nor to draw up a very detailed supplement to the plan and a special resolution containing a detailed enumeration of articles earmarked for the market. A change must be brought about in industry to achieve the timely production of good-quality products needed for the market. It cannot be, as heretofore, that despite the fulfillment of the plan by industry, the market does not receive the full 100 percent of its allotment while stockpiles gain at its expense. This is especially true in the case of goods such as light bulbs and rolled products.

A particularly important task faces the agricultural food products, meat, baking, milk, and local industries. These industries should study the needs and the tastes of the consumer and supply him with a better assortment and quality of products.

After the abolition of the rationing system on 3 January 1953, a shortage of high-grade products became apparent on the market, while unsalable stocks of bad or badly packed products appeared. These poor products, which do not meet the needs of the consumer, are filling our commercial and factory storehouses. This is hindering production, since factories glutted with commercially

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unacceptable stocks cannot produce more. These excessive stocks and production difficulties deprive many plant workers of premium pay and result in a loss of millions to the public.

Poor-quality candies and cosmetics did not find buyers during the fourth quarter of 1952 and the first quarter of 1953. This resulted in serious production restrictions in the candy factories. The efforts undertaken by the consumer goods industry to improve quality, increase variety, and raise production gave positive results: better cosmetic products and better candies have enjoyed greater sales. Starting with the third quarter of 1953 there have been no sales difficulties.

Unfortunately, in many basic branches of industry producing for the needs of the consumer market, no noticeable improvement has been made. Clothing and shoe production still is poor in variety and quantity. Relating this to what Comrade Stawinski said about shoes for children, it must be said that the amount of shoes produced for children should be enough for our market. We could theoretically even produce less if they were better. This also applies to shoes for adults. Shoes wear out too quickly because of bad quality. Despite the fact that we import good leather, our shoes are still not good. Special attention should be given to this matter. There must also be a decided increase in the production, assortment, and quality of smoked and fresh meats, although quite a bit has been done in this field already.

Food services must also be properly organized and must be treated as an important segment of our consumer goods production.

We must also begin production in key-industry plants of goods for the consumer market and also begin production based on waste materials in local plants. Through the initiative of the working class, a number of plants have already started this production. Here we can point to the initiative of the personnel of the Karol Swierczewski plant and the ZISPO (Zaklady imeni Stalina w Poznaniu, Stalin Plants in Poznan), which are producing many metal products for the consumer market. The machine plant in Tarnow has started to produce hoes, horseshoes, and hammers for the village. Workers at the Szczecin and Gdansk Shipyards also have started market production. It must be stated, however, that this is happening on the initiative of the working class, some times quite spontaneously, and that it is not being directed by the trade apparatus, which is not showing sufficient initiative itself in starting this production.

All trade organizations, from the ministry through the central trade offices, the PZGS (Powiatowy Zarnad Gminny Spoldzielni, Powiat Administration of Gmina Cooperatives), the GS (Gminne Spoldzielnie, Gmina Cooperatives), down to the trade divisions and offices, must join in the battle for the fulfillment of the plan for market deliveries and for high quality. They must show initiative in starting new production.

Planning of commodity distribution must be placed on a higher level. Unfortunately, planning and distribution in trade still leaves much to be desired. Routine planning results in shortages in one wojewodztwo or powiat while others often have a surplus. This results in useless duplication of transportation as occurred, for example, with raincoats produced in Trzebinia and sent to Wroclaw, only to return in 3 weeks to Chrzanow (which is near Trzebinia).

"Trade planning has its own peculiarities and requirements," said Comrade Mikoyan at a pre-election meeting in 1950. This type planning should take into consideration important factors which are often subject to change; for example it should take into consideration supply and demand, consumer satisfaction, regional and local peculiarities, and climatic conditions. Trade planning should be flexible and operational."

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The Ministry of Domestic Trade and the trade organizations must eliminate basic deficiencies in the work of our trade apparatus. They should improve planning and eliminate habits of inoperative and mechanical planning, eliminate the lack of proper cooperation between wholesale and retail trade, improve reporting operations which are inoperative and do not permit proper planning, show direct concern for the retail stores and retail trade in general through enterprise administrations, raise the cultural level of trade and food services, and show more concern for products and their preservation.

The Ministry of Domestic Trade still is not showing sufficient energy in striving for quality, and it is not taking full advantage of the decrees for the protection of the consumer and the quality of production. The ministry and trade organizations manifest a literal and opportunistic attitude toward goods of undesirable variety, badly finished, or with defects. This is especially true of industrial products. We are not effectively establishing technical requirements for the production of market products, nor are we effectively concluding detailed agreements with industry. Agreements without which the struggle for quality cannot give results.

An end must be put to the chain of accepting bad goods. The inspector accepts the bad product from the worker, the warehouse man from the inspector, the wholesale man from the factory, the retail man from the wholesale man, the salesgirl from the stockroom. The customer is told: "Take what you are given, because I have nothing else." Recently, when a customer complained about a product, a salesgirl told him: "Mister, you had better go to the Minister of Domestic Trade to complain about this bad product; I can't do anything about it." The struggle for quality and adequate variety, carried on jointly by industrial workers and those in trade, is in the interest of the consumer and for the good of society.

In discussing the tasks of commerce, I would like to consider the role of the presidiums of the people's councils, which are responsible on all levels for the welfare of the population and for the work of the trade apparatus. Unfortunately, the presidiums of the people's councils in many cases do not fully realize their duties in this field. Many presidiums fail to see the full scope of the problems of providing for the people. The people's councils can do a great deal to improve the supply of goods for the working man by means which lie entirely within their sphere of activity. These means include: the proper establishment of a trade network based on an analytical knowledge of the purchasing power of a given region, planning for market needs, and distribution of available goods equitably throughout a region.

Among the problems which should be resolved completely by the presidiums of the people's councils are: supervision of trade organizations and shops for the fulfillment of plans and distribution, complete and constant supply to wholesalers and retail stores, initiative and aid in exploiting the regional capabilities for the production of consumer articles, the organization and development of decentralized purchasing, an increase in market places, the development of village trade through production surpluses, and the development of peddler stands and mobile sales points for industrial articles for the village. The quality of bakery goods, smoked and fresh meats, and the high culinary and sanitary level for food establishments, regardless of whether these bakeries, meat shops, butcher shops, or restaurants belong to the state, the ZSS (Związek Spółdzielni Spożywców, Union of Consumers' Cooperatives), or the CRS (Centralna Rada Spółdzielcza, Central Cooperative Council), should be a particularly important task for the people's councils.

It must be admitted that after the reform of 3 January [1953], in comparison with the period previous to this, there followed a certain -- although still inadequate -- improvement in supplies of food products and industrial articles.

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The increase in the production of the food industry and light industry, predicted by Boleslaw Bierut in his report, will undoubtedly result in further improvements in 1954 and in following years.

We must fully realize, however, that in a few articles we are still not in a position to fully cover the needs of the market. Among these articles are meats and fats. Here a notable improvement has been made over 1952, when meats and fats were rationed. Thus, during the first three quarters of 1953 the market supply increased over 1952 by 23 percent in fresh meats, 54 percent in smoked meats, and 40 percent in animal fats. This same ratio over 1952 is being maintained during the fourth quarter of 1953, and an increase of about 15 percent is being planned for 1954 for meats and fats in general.

Despite such great advances there still is a great shortage of meats and fats. This requires, on the one hand, complete discipline in fulfilling distribution plans and, on the other hand, the seeking of many substitutes, which, to a certain degree, should decrease meat requirements. Here I have in mind not only such food articles as fresh and pickled fish of all types (unfortunately there still is a surplus which is not being sold), but also food articles such as blood sausage [with cereal] for which the plan is not being fulfilled. I also have in mind greater activity in the sale of industrial commodities.

Finally, I should like to discuss the very important tasks which face the Ministry of Domestic Trade and the presidiums of the people's councils in supplying the villages; in developing a network of stores, service points, peddler stands, and mobile sales points; and in adequately supplying wholesalers and GS stores with a full assortment of industrial and building materials, and farm machinery. A change must be made in the poor distribution of building materials for the village. The greatly increased quantity of building materials -- some already available in the fourth quarter of 1953 -- must be distributed more flexibly. The bureaucratic system of distribution through powiat commissions must end. This system cannot be retained, and I hope that there will soon be a directive permitting the distribution of most building materials by the gmina directly, leaving only a small quantity for powiat action, for possible fire damage etc., with the condition that if the amount reserved for the powiat is not sold by the 28th day of each month, it will be transferred immediately to the gmina. I hope that this directive will remove any obstacle to the distribution of building materials for the village.

The people's councils, party organizations, trade unions, and ZMP (Związek Młodzieży Polskiej, Union of Polish Youth) organizations should devote more attention and time to socialist trade cadres than heretofore. Among the several hundred thousand commercial workers there are many dedicated workers. Raising all the workers of the socialist trade organization to an exemplary level is necessary to improve the work of our socialist trade organization.

The great program of state aid for the village, and especially for the small and medium individual farmer, as presented by Boleslaw Bierut, includes the maintenance of compulsory deliveries for the coming years on an unchanged level, reductions in compulsory deliveries of milk and food, and an extension of the very advantageous contract terms for suckling pigs, calves, and hogs.

The purchasing apparatus, the presidiums of the people's councils, and all party units should take advantage of all these forms of aid by the state for the village to promote current fulfillment of contract deliveries and to increase and reestablish discipline in fulfilling the deliveries, which has become so lax in the last few months. This last stage of our struggle for bread now takes on special importance. We must guard against weakening the drive behind our grain purchasing action and against attempts to prolong this action for weeks and even

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months. We must exert a decisive effort to conclude the grain purchasing program. On the basis of the recent concessions, we must quickly and systematically settle accounts, village by village, gmina by gmina, powiat by powiat; break the resistance of the kulak and speculator; mobilize the leading small and medium peasants, and fulfill the plan for grain purchasing.

We must realize that on the fulfillment of the grain purchase plan (less specified reductions) and on the fulfillment of grain deliveries by State Farms depends the adequate supply of bread for the working class and the population, the stability of the market, and the successful realization of the aims of which we speak today.

In connection with the retention of compulsory deliveries during the coming years on the same level and the extension of contract purchases on the same profitable terms, the purchasing apparatus and socialist trade must be prepared for more flexible purchases of surplus commodities available after the fulfillment of compulsory deliveries. We must guard, however, against the possibility that speculators or kulaks will try to sell livestock before the fulfillment of contract deliveries at higher prices under a fictitious contract, as they did in January and February of 1953. We must guard against illegal trade in agricultural products, remembering that surpluses can be sold by producers only after the fulfillment of compulsory deliveries. These surpluses are being sold either to our purchasing apparatus, which must work more flexibly, or to the consumer directly at the market place. The expansion of the latter type sales should be the concern of the people's councils.

There must be an improvement and a change in the organization of milk purchasing through the improved work and better technical equipment at the milk collection points and the creation of conditions of collection and control to preclude cheating of peasants on milk purchases. The people's councils must show greater and more active responsibility in this important work.

Among our greatest weaknesses in purchasing are the cadres of this organization. Many in the purchasing organization are weak, professionally and politically. Many are heartless bureaucrats on good terms with the kulak, and we often encounter grafters who succumb to the pressure of the enemy.

The fulfillment of the great tasks that face the purchasing and contracting organization requires (1) constant, systematic attention and (2) supervision, by party units and the people's councils, of personnel, from the lowest CRS level to the ministerial level.

The purchasing and contracting organization is very susceptible to leftist or opportunistic deviations. Therefore, every worker of the purchasing apparatus -- who after all is, or at least should be, the regional agitator for our policy in the village -- should be given special attention and should be trained so that he can adequately fulfill the tasks assigned to him. This is one of the more important duties of party organizations and units for the immediate future.

With the notable quickening in the growth of light industry and the food industry, and with the increase in agricultural production, there have also been corresponding important structural changes in Polish foreign trade. There has been a decrease in the import of industrial machines and equipment in actual and in relative terms. Imports of raw materials, especially for light industry and the food industry, are growing, although raw materials for heavy industry also show a very high index of growth. The import of food products is growing, especially in 1954, because of the great import of grains mentioned previously. This tendency of increased imports of food and industrial and consumer articles is in prospect for future years also.

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The trend in exports for the next few years will be an increase in the export of industrial machines, equipment, and of products which our socialist industry will be able to produce above and beyond the needs of the country. This applies to automobiles, tractors, and complete equipment for industrial plants, as, for example, the export to China of two complete sugar factories. Therefore, besides railroad rolling stock and ships, new export fields are being developed. Thus, with the maintenance on more or less the same level of raw materials exports, such as coal, a certain reduction in the export of foodstuffs will follow.

This change in the structure of foreign trade will demand a great effort by the workers in foreign trade, by industry, by engineering and technical workers, and by personnel producing these articles for export.

We must systematically remove all errors and deficiencies in our work. We must combat bureaucracy and defective work and we must make a great organizational effort for the most rapid and most efficient realization of the ninth plenum resolutions of the party. The food, meat, milk, light, and local industries should produce an increasing amount of goods of wide variety and good quality by utilizing untapped production, supply, and financial resources. Trade should raise its organizational level and standards in order to service the working masses more cheaply and more effectively.

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